A Sermon of repentaunce.

A verie godlie and profitable Sermon, preached at Lee in Essex, by *Arthur Dent, Minister of Gods word And published at the request of sundrie Godly and well disposed persons.*

Ionah chap. 2. ver. 8.

They that waite vpon lying vanities,
Forsake their owne mercie.

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1583.

A

To the reader.

ALthough I was moſte vnwilling that this poore Talent had trauayle of myne, ſhould euer haue bene breched abroade, and come to light: both becauſe it maye ſeeme as a Candle lighted at noone day: as alſo becauſe manye other mennes dooings might more woorthilie a great deale haue bene publiſhed, & committed vnto letters. Yet bicauſe diuers which hard it preached with a liuely voice, were very inſtant, yea, and more than importunate with me to haue it publiſhed, vſing ſuch reaſons as I could not well gainſay, I did at the laſt yeeld to their requeſt, and ſo this vntimely fruit is come abroad, to be ſold in open markettes. Let no man be offended that I haue not ſtrained my ſelfe to fly an high pitch, to ſome out the froth of mans wiſdome, & to make a great ſhew of learning, by blowing the bladder of vanitie, til it burſt with ſwelling. For that is not my vſe, I ſeeke eſpecially the ſaluation of the

To the reader.

ſimple and ignorant, and therefore ſtoupe downe to their reach and capacitie. Therefore I beſeeche thee gentle Reader, accept my good meaning: Reade this without preiudice, like it as thou profiteſt, ſo ſhalte thou haue praiſe of God, & comforte in thy conſcience.

A.D.

The Text. Luke. 13.5.

I tell you nay: but except you repent you shall likewise perish.

THE occasion of these wordes of our Lord and Sauiour Iesus Christe, was because there were certayne that shewed him of the Galileans, whose bloud Pilate had mingled with their owne Sacrifices: That is, murthered them as they weere sacrificeing: and so their bloude was mingled with the bloud of the beastes whiche were sacrificed. Those men therefore, thought that these Galileans weere greater sinners then all other Galileans, because they had suffered suche thynges. And that those xviii. also vppon whome the Tower in Siloam fell and slue them, were sinners aboue all men that dwelt in Hierusalem. Wherein they did vtter a secret corruptiō naturally ingendred in all men, that is verie sharply to see into the sinnes of others, & seuerelie to censure thē: but in the mean

while to flatter themselues, & to be blinde-fold in seeing their owne sinnes. For these men thought, because the like iudgments did not fall vpon them, therfore they were safe inough, and were not so great sinners but rather highly in the fauour of GOD. According as many do falsly suppose, that those are alwaies the worst sort of people whome God doth most strike, and presse with his punishing hande, hauing forgotten that God doth not keepe an ordinarie rate here beloiwe, to punish euery man as hee is worst, or to fauour & cocker him as he is best, but onely taketh some examples as he thinketh good, for the instruction and admonishement of all others, and to be as it were looking glasses, wherein euerie man may see his owne face, yea, and his owne cause handeled, & that God is a seuere reuenger of sin, that all men maie learne by the example of some, to tremble & beware, least peraduenture they be worthily constrained to keepe their owne turnes, and to knowe what they haue deserued. These men whithe brought these newes to our Sauiour Christ, had not taken forth this lesson, whereupon our Sauiour is iustly occasioned

occasioned to correct their erroneous, and sinister Iudgment, and to teach them that they must not reioice at the iuste punishement of others, but rather to be instructed thereby to repentance.

And further to signifie, that God dooth not alwayes most punishe the moste notorious offenders, as murtherers, Theues, Robbers, Whoremaisters, Blasphemers, Quarrellers, Scoffers, and suche like, but reserueth them vnto the iudgement of the great daie, and as it were fatteth them against the daie of slaughter: and therefore he answereth them negatiuely, and saieth nay, or not so, but except you repente, you shall al likewise perish: as if he should say, are you of this opinion indeede, that onely monstrous sinners are punished in this worlde, & others let alone: or that the Galileans, and these eighteene vppon whome the Tower in Siloā fell, were greater sinners, then all others? Or doe you thinke because the same Iudgementes haue not light vpon you, therefore you shal steale away in the darke, & escape the Iudgement of God? No, no, you are deceiued. For I say vnto you, that except you mourne and

lamente for our sinnes, and fall to some agreement with God in time (you I say, euen you which are so ready to condemne others, and iustifie your selues) shall not onely perish with the like iudgementes in this present worlde, but be euerlastingly condemned in the worlde to come. So that our Sauiour in so saying, doeth thunder downe a most dreadfull sentence vpon all our heades: for he concludeth and setteth it downe, that all men liuing vpon the face of the earth, whether they be highe or lowe, rich or poore, young or old, noble or vnnoble, learned or vnlearned, simple or politicke, of what estate, degree, and condition soeuer they bee liuing, and dying without repentaunce, shall perishe and be damned in Hell fire for euer. The Scriptures are full of suche Thunderbolles: Iohn. 3. 18. He that beleeueth not is damned alreadie. And 2. Cor. 13. verse 5. Proue your selues whether you are in the Fayth, eximyne your selues. Knowe yee not your owne selues that Iesus Christ is in you, except yee bee reprobates? Where the Apostle flatlie setteth downe, that all those which haue not Christ dwelling in their harts by faith

which

which is the houshold sister of repentance, are no better then reprobates, castaways, and condemned persons. But because the most people in these dayes are grosse deceived in Repentaunce, bothe concerning what it is, what it meaneth, what it worketh, what bee the qualities, & conditions of it, which be the causes, and which be the lets and hinderaunces, & also why, when and wherefore we should repent. Therefore I haue in perfect intent to teach first what is Repentaunce. Secondly, which bee the qualities and effectes. Thirdly, when we should repente. Fourthlie, wherefore we should repent. And last of all what letteth vs from Repentaunce, which order, and methode of teaching, although some maye mislike (as indeede with me it is not ordinarye) yet considering the matter I haue in hand, I thinke it not inconuenient. But the matter Repentance is an inward sorrowing, and continuall mourninge of the heart and conscience for sinne, ioined with fayth, and bothe inwarde, and outwarde amendement: Inwarde I say in chaunging the thoughtes and affections of the heart: and outwarde in chaunging the woordes,

and wo:kes from euill to good. This Repentaunce no doubte was in David, who when he was courtly rep:oued by the prophet Nathan, e his sinnes laide before his eies, did not stubbo:nly defende them, and so iustle against God: no: yet secretlie excuse them, and daube them over, but cried out in the bitternesse of his hearte: I haue sinned: and therupon made the 51. Psalm. A Psalme indeed full of dolour, and heauines: Wherein the Prophet bewaileth his faltes, lamenteth his sinnes, and praieth euen for a newe hearte, and a newe spirite, newe thoughtes, newe affections, newe purpoles of amendment of life. So that in David we may se an inwarde so:rowing, a lasting griefe (as the booke of Psalmes doeth euerie where declare, which layeth him out as it were in an Anotamie) yea, and great refo:mation, bothe in inwarde, e outward sinnes. Here therfo:e beholde what is Repentance. Likewise S. Peter through infirmity hauing denied his Lo:d and Maister Christ, and being punched of his owne conscience, e wakened with the alaram of a pore Cockes crowing, wente ou: of the Courte of Pilate with a heauie

heart

heart weeping bitterlie, & euer after stoutly professing Christe euen vnto the death. See then what is Repentance. The Prophetes in the olde Testament exhorting ỳ rebellious Iewes vnto Repentance, vse commonly an Hebrew worde, which signifieth turne ye, or returne ye & come backe againe: by the which Metaphor is meant, that like as a man that is strayed far out of his way, must turne quite backe againe the contrarie waie: So those ỳ haue strayed from the waies of Godlinesse, to the way of sinne, must come backe againe, as fast as euer they went forward, & altogether change the course of their life: so that Repentaunce is an earnest turning vnto God with all our heart, soule and minde. Saincte John Baptist, and the Apostles in the New Testament exhorting vnto Repentaunce, vse a Greeke word, which signifieth a chaunginge of the minde afterwarde, or afterwitte, so that those which through their folly & want of former wit, haue slipped into the deepe pit, and daungerous gulfe of sinne, when they come to themselues, & haue recouered their wits, will be wise afterward, & take heede they

neuer

neuer come there againe according to the Prouerbe: The burnt child will take heede of the Fire. By this time I hope you see what is repentaunce. It is not euerie sorrowe, but sorrowe for sinne, not for some sinne, but for all sin, not for an houre, but for euer, not for a day, but continually, not for a weeke, but as long as we liue. Some thinke euerie sorrow is repentance: but so should worldlinges repent. Some thynke euerie little paine for sin is Repentance: so shoulde Pharaoh repente. Some thinke all weeping and lamenting for sinne is repentaunce: so should Esau, Iudas & Caine repent. Some thinke euerie litle humbling of our selues is repentaunce: but so should Achab repent. Some thinke ỹ good words, and good purposes is Repentaunce: but so should euerie sicke man repente. Some thinke ỹ reformation of words and deeds is Repentaunce: but so shoulde ciuill men repent. Some thinke that crie God mercy is repentaunce: and so shoulde euerie fole repent. Youle therfore how many are detained in Repentaunce: but if you will see what it is indeede, looke backe to ỹ which path bene lande afore. For hy that will re-

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pent in good earnest, must not hang downe his heade like a Bulrushe for a day onely, and so haue doone, nor crie from the teeth outward, Lord haue mercie on me, and so away: but he must make a back reckoning with diligent consideration of his former life. As did the Prophet Dauid. Psal. 119. vers. 59. I haue considered thy waies, and haue turned my feete vnto thy testimonies. So must euery one that meaneth to repent slinke aside into some corner or out place, that there hee maie haue rome enough to beate his owne conscience, & to make his heart smart for his sinnes, by aggrauation thereof, & weighing all the circumstances, as in the 6. of Daniel: The Church of God confesseth her sinne, not lightly but with woonderfull great exaggeration, and heaping of one thing to an other. So that it is not enough to say I haue sinned, but to say I haue most traitrously sinned, I haue most obstinatly, carelesly, and rebellionsly sinned, I haue monstrously offended in such a place, in such an houre, in such companie, in suche a daie. In suche a corner in the darke I committed adulteries closly, when I thought none had seene mee: In suche a

Chamber

Chamber I defiled my neighbours wife, mine owne conscience doeth accuse mee of it. In suche and suche companie I haue bene dronke, I haue spoken and rayled a-gainst Gods woordes, I haue mocked the preachers, I haue spared no others, nor filthy spæch, and now, O Lorde, Lorde, what an vgley monster, and wretched villaine am I. Here I stand before thy presence all naked, blinde, wounded, poore, wretched, and miserable, hauing deserued a thousand damnations, if thou shouldest enter into Iudgement, and trie the lawe with mee. Therefore I beseeche thee shewe pitie and compassion vpon me. Annoint my wounds with the oyle of mercie, restore me my sight, cloath my nakednes, enrich me that am poore, strengthen mee that am weake, helpe me that am fallen: forbid mæ not farewell. The infant ouercometh his mother with crying, the child his father with wæping, & the seruant his maister by entreaty, & wilt not thou be intreated, O Lord? Thus I say if euerie man would speak in his conscience to God, & thus narrowly or more narrowly examine himselfe, vndoubtedly he were in the way of repentance.

But

But alas it is a woꝛlde to ſée how the blinde Bullards, and crooked cancre woꝛmes of this woꝛlde, goe awꝛye from this rule, deceiuing them ſelues with the bare title and naked name of repentaunce. Manie indéede can talke of it, but fewe walke in it. Manie ſpeake of it, but fewe fæle it. Manie deſcribe it, but few knowe it. It is hidde and locked vp from the woꝛlde, and reuealed onely to Gods childꝛen. Manie think they haue caught it when they haue but the ſhadow of it. It is ſo high that few can reache it. It is ſo déepe that fewe can come to the bottome of it. It is ſo narrowe that fewe can pearce into it. So wide that few can compꝛehende it. So ſlipperie that fewe can holde it. So ſecrete that few can finde it. Therefoꝛe my deare bꝛethꝛen, I beſéech you let vs pꝛay vnto our God, that hee woulde reueale vnto vs this myſterie which is hid from the woꝛld, that we may truly ſée it, and know it, finde it, & fæle it to our endles comfoꝛt, thꝛough Chꝛiſt Ieſus: which grace he graunt vs.

But now to the ſeconde point concerning the qualities, and fruites of repentance. One ſpeciall qualitie of repentance

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is alwayes to bringe with it remission of sinnes: for where true Repentance goeth before, there remission of sinnes muste necessarily follow after, not that repentance deserueth remission of sinne: but because where God worketh repentance, there he pardoneth sinne because of his promise. As in Ezech. 18. 27. When the wicked turneth awaye from his wickednesse that hee hath committed, and dooth that whych is lawfull and right, he shall saue his soule aliue. And againe, Esay. 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his wayes, and the vnrighteous his owne imaginations, and returne vnto the Lorde, and he will haue mercie vppon him. So here we se to whom forgiuenesse of sinnes, and the mercies of God belongeth: Namelie to the penitent sinners, to those that leaue sinne, and imbrace godlynes: to those that forsake his owne wayes and imaginations, & turne vnto the Lord. And as for such as walke on in their owne wayes, and follow ỹ delightes of sin without any sorrow, or purpose to leaue them, they haue nothing to dee with the mercie of God: and thogh Jesus Christ had suffered an hundred deathes (which could not

be

be) yet shal no vnpenitent sinner haue remission of his sinnes by his death, nor any other benefites of his Passion, for they belonge onely to his Church, and chosen people heere vpon the earth. He therefore that is not of the Church, he that is not grafted into Christ by faith, he that is not a member of his mistical body, can inioy nothing by Christes death. If any man abide not in me, he is cast foorth, as a braunch, and withereth, and men gather them, and caste them into the fire, and they burne; Iohn. 15 9. We reade in the 29. of Deuteronomie, Howe God barreth all stubborne sinners from his mercie, and doeth moste terrible shoote out against them. Hee that heareth the wordes of this curse, and blesseth himselfe in his heart, saying, I shal haue peace althoughe I walke accordinge to the stubbornnesse of our owne heart, thus adding dronkennes to thirst: the Lorde will not be mercifull vnto him, but then the wrath of the Lorde, and his tealousie shall smoke against that manne, and euerie curse that is written in this booke, shall light vppon him. So that God faith plainelie, hee hath no mercie for such as walke in the vaine

delights of sinne, and in the blockishnes of their owne heart, adding drunkennesse to thirst, that is, one horrible sin to an other. Yet for all this it is a wonder to see, how y blind wormes of this earth deceiue themselues. For they thinke whatsoeuer they say, whatsoeuer they doe, be it good, be it euill, whether they repent or not repent, yet they shall be saued by Christs death, as though they would make it a band to their sinnes, and so worke that villanie against Christ. I hope to be saued by Christs death, as wel as the best of them al saith som. But wher is thy repentance thou miserable wretch? Dost thou thinke that Gods mercie is common to all, and Christs death a bande for thy sinnes? No, no, when it commeth to the vpshot, thou shalt stoppe short. For it will proue farre otherwise: for thou shalt finde Gods mercye tourned into Iustice, and Christes death into Wormewood: because thou hatedst knowledge, and choosedst not the feare of the Lorde. Thus you see my deare brethren, that Repentaunce must needs go before forgiuenes of sinnes, and where it leadeth not the waye, there the gates of Gods mercie are shutte vp,

and

and this is the firſt qualitie of repentance. It hath alſo another condition, and that is to alter and chaunge men from that they were before, not in the ſubſtance and proportion of the bodie: but in the qualities & conditions of the minde. For whoſoeuer hath truelye repented, you ſhall by and by ſee a moſte marueylous, and wonderfull chaunge in him, ſo that he will not doe as he hath done, nor ſpeake as he hath ſpoke, nor companie, as he hath companied, nor play the good fellowe (as they terme it) as he was wont to do, nor runne to the ſame exceſſe of riot he was wont. And this is it that amazeth the worlde, and cauſeth them to bridle and ſome at the mouth like wild Horſes, and to ſpeake euil of them that are turned vnto God. For the worlde loueth his owne, and can not abide that GOD ſhould pluck one feather from his Wings. But repentaunce doth violently pull men out of the clawes of Sathan, and chaunge them from the conditions of the worlde, for it maketh of proude, humble, of hartfull, harmeleſſe, of cruell, meeke, of Moores, Lambes, of Lions, Sheepe, of adulterers, Chaſte liuers, of Drunkardes, ſober men,

of Swearers, reuerent speakers, of Haters, Louers, of Despisers, Imbracers, of Scoffers, Followers, of Earthly, Heauenlie, of Deuils, Saincts. All this worketh Repentance. Paul trauelleth toward Damascus, a Woolfe, a Persecuter, a Bloudsucker, a Hater, a Despiser: but ere he came there, he was quite chaunged, and cleane of another minde. So mightie was he that met him by the way. When Iesus Christ sent down the holy Ghost vpon his Disciples, according to his promise, there were some scoffers at Hierusalem, which mocked & saide, they are full of new wine: But the same men cryed out by and by after: Men and brethren, what shall we doe to bee saued. Here was a most wonderfull and suddaine chaunge. See then the force of Repentaunce, when God striketh it into the hearte of man, and driueth the nayle to the heade as they say. It effecteth that which all the wisedome and policie of man, is not able to bring to passe, no when they haue prolled hither and thither, and laide their heades together, and sought all the corners of their wits, yet can they not tell which waye to tourne their hande, or

where

where to begin to chaunge the hearte of a man, and to conuert him to God. Therefore Repentaunce is stronger than all the whole worlde, and worketh that which all men with their naturall wittes, fine heades, and deepe deuises cannot compasse, for the conuersion of a Sinner is a worke supernaturall. Here then we haue a glasse to beholde our selues in, whether euer wee haue repented or no. For if wee finde not this change and alteration in vs, we haue not repented, and so consequently remaine vnder Damnation. Therefore lette euerie man loke vnto himselfe, for marke how much he is chaunged, and altred from his former euill waies, so much hath he repented. And he that is the same man he was three, foure, eight, nay thirtie yeares agoe, surelie, surelie, hee hath not repented, and therefore abideth in damnation. I marueil then how those menne which neuer felt anie change, or alteration wrought in them, nay, whose consciences tell them, that they are not chaunged, ne knowe what it meaneth, can haue any hope of Saluation: Vnlesse peraduenture they beleue not this doctrine, or think it to

be faulse. But I will sende ouer these men to such as haue beene in the like case they nowe are, and yet thought they might doe well enough for all that, although both blinde in Iudgement, and corrupt in conuersation, I haue knowen and doe knowe men, which before their conuertion, and inwarde chaunge, were counted as honest menne as euer brake breade, and as substantiall men as anie coulde bee, as true dealers, vpright liuers, and good housekeepers as any of their neighbours, yea, and they had the same opinion of themselues too. And yet notwithstanding when they haue felte Repentaunce woorkinge this chaunge and alteration in them, through the power of the Spirite, at the preaching of the woord, and when they haue had new hearts giuen them to discerne better, and newe eyes to see better, as men come out of a dampe, haue wondred and maruelled at the palpable and grosse darkenesse they were in before, and haue burst forth into these wordes, that they woulde not bee in the same case they were afore, no not for all the worlds goods, for if they should haue

haue béene damned: But I pray you what case were they in before, were they not good honest men, & well accounted of, and honest liuers, and wel taken where soeuer they came? Surely they were so taken in the world, but now they thinke far otherwise of themselues, their eies being opened, and their Iudgementes enlightened, for now they see that they sawe not before, now they vnderstand ỳ God condemneth manie whome the worlde iustifieth. Me thinketh this example shoulde make ciuill and worldlie men see and suspecte themselues, and knowe their owne miserie before God. For these men were as good as they before their conuersion, and yet afterwarde confesse that they were plunged in the Bottome of Hell, and drowned in the deapth of Damnation. He that hath eares to heare, let him heare, and he that hath eyes to see let him see: For if men will flatter themselues for all this, that they shal be saued without seeling any chaunge, or worke of repentance.

It will cost them full deare in the end, for Christs wordes will proue true, that whosoeuer repenteth not shal be damned,

that is, whosoeuer doeth not feele in himselfe what is Repentance, and find in himselfe the qualities thereof, shalbe condemned. For where Repentaunce is, there be the qualities of Repentaunce, and where the qualities be absent, there is no true repentaunce. So that where Christ saieth, Except ye repent ye shall all perish: It is all one, as if he had saide, except ye knowe the truth of Repentaunce, except ye can proue vnto your consciences the forgiuenesse of your sinnes, except you feele a chaunge and alteration in the bottome of your heart, of all your former lewd waies and misdemeanour, you shal surelie perish and be damned. But let vs yet a little further search out the qualities of repentance. The Apostle in the seuenth Chapter of the seconde Epistle to the Corinthians, setteth downe seaven notable qualities, and effectes of Repentance. The first of them he nameth Care. For behold saith he, this thing that you haue byn godlie sorie what Care it hath wrought in you, that is, an earnestnesse, and as it were a taking thoughte to please God. For where true Repentance hath once wrought, there followeth

loweth great care afterwarde. Care I saie to liue in the obedience of God: Care to keepe a good conscience: Care to reforme our houlholdes: Care to instruct Wiues, Children, and Seruauntes, in the knowledge of GOD: Care to pray with them Morning and Euening: and generallye, Care to performe all dueties belonging vnto God: so that Repentaunce is not a careleſſe, but a carefull thing. Let not men thinke therefore, that although they welter in the careleſneſſe of the fleſh, and ſleepe in ſecuritie all the daies of their life, yet their Repentaunce is good inough, yea and though they ſpende whole daies, nightes, Monethes, and Yeres in vanities, Playes and paſtimes, in Idleneſſe, fonde delight, pleaſure, and voluptuouſneſſe, in negligence of all dueties, forgetfulneſſe of God, and contempt of all good thinges: yet for al this they repent for their ſinnes, and hope to be ſaued as well as any other. But alas how can theſe thinges ſtand together, to repent for ſinne, and to delight in ſin, to hate ſinne, and loue ſinne, to flie from ſinne, and to follow after ſinne. But theſe men I perceyue, woulde faine make

Saint

Saint Paule a lyar. For he sayeth, a man hath neuer repented, except hee be carefull afterward to please God. They say they do repent, and haue repented: although they liue neuer so wretchedly & carelesly. But when al licentious and lewd liuers, filthie Whoremongers, beastlie Belly gods, and carelesse caitifes, come to the kingdome of God, and are saued; then shall these men also come with them to be saued by careless repentance.

The next qualitie and effect of Repentaunce is named, clearing of our selues, that is, discharging of our selues, when sinne doth accuse vs, and laye thinges to our charge, for when Sinne and Sathan doth terrifie the conscience of the poore penitent sinner, by and by he flieth vnto God and sueth forgiuenesse thorough Iesus Christ, and so cleareth himselfe, and maketh his Apologie against Sinne and Sathan, like as a man that is presented into the Court, vppon suspicion of whoredome, or any other notorious crime, must cleare himselfe by witnesses, of that which is laide to his charge. So the conscience that is cited by Sathan before the Iustice, and

Iudge-

Iudgement seate of God, cleareth it selfe by Repentaunce, and asketh forgiuenesse through Iesus Christ. So that heere wee may see a wonderfull fruit of a penitent conscience, it cannot abide the accusations of sinne: It cannot be quiet till it bee reconciled vnto God: & to haue peace within it selfe. For this is to be noted in the godlie man, that when he hath committed anie sinne, and his conscience telleth him of it, by and by he feeleth Leade within him, and is all heauie, and cannot sleepe quietly, till he haue got into some corner, where he may mourne and lament to the full, and confesse and lay open himselfe vnto God, and to cleare himselfe through Christ Iesus, his conscience bearing him witnes that his sinne is forgiuen. Where as contrariwise the vngodlie man, when his conscience accuseth him of sinne, he dispatcheth alwaye all such thoughts, and treadeth them vnder foote, and by and by calleth for a paire of Cardes, or Tables, and some merie companion to driue away the time, and to put all suche thoughtes out of his heade, and so indeede bee increaseth them more and more, and causeth

them

them rankle inwardly.

The third qualitie is called indignation, that is, a mortall and deadly hatred against sinne, as when a man dooth shudder and shake, and as it were grinde his teeth at the remembrance of his sinnes: for this is alwaies in the penitent person, to loth and abhorre all sin from his heart, both his owne sinnes, and the sinnes of other, and to hate it as the Deuill himselfe, which is the Author of it, and to flie from it, as from the very Cutthroat, and Hangman of his soule: and to know it to be the onely thing that blindeth, and hardeneth, that separateth from God, and procureth all Plagues and Diseases, both of body and soule against vs. Therfore he spitteth at it in defiance, and disdaineth it, and stoppeth his nose at the stincke of it, whersoeuer he smelleth it.

The fourth thing is feare, which is a certaine awe of God, when a man is afrayde to displease him. For the penitent Person feareth alway, and being privy to his owne infirmitie and weakues (whe God neuer so litle withdraweth his grace and leaueth him alone) worketh his Salvation

nation with feare and trembling. He will not presume vpon former grace to commit any sinne, nor flatter himself in the mercie of God, and in the things that he hath already tasted of God, to yeeld to some little sinne, thinking he may doe that, and bee the child of God well inough, bicause some of Gods children haue fallen into greater. but rather he trembleth at the least motiõ of sinne, and is afraid of the temptations which Sathan trumpeth in his waye, and is afraide when the temptations of sinne are vppon him, to satisfie the hunger of sin, but rather he fighteth against sinne, when sin fighteth against him, and presenteth the feare of God before his eies (as godlie Joseph in the assault of Putiphars wife) to be as it were a Tower of defence and welspring of life, to auoid the snares of death.

The fifth thing is Desire, that is hungring and thirsting after righteousnesse.

For the penitent man is rauished with desire of good things: He desireth to be euery day better than other: he desireth to leaue euery day some sinne: he desireth to praye. Hee desireth newe knowledge,

ledge, and new vnderstanding of heauenlie things. He desireth to heare Sermons, and wil straine himselfe to heare them. He desireth the company of the godly, he thinketh himselfe in heauen, when he is emongest them. He desireth the saluation of his verie ennemies, and praieth for them. As these and many other such like desires are in the penitent man.

The sixth qualitie is zeale, which consisteth in the earnest imbracing of vertue, and hatred of vice, so that the penitent person is zealous in euerie good thing. Zealous of Gods glorie in al places, in al companies, and emongest all persons, he cannot abide that Gods honour should be impeached, or his name blasphemed, or his glorie trampled vnder foot by wicked men but he will open his mouth to reproue the wicked, and stand stoutly in the defence of Gods glorie. He is not like these Atheistes and dissemblers, which are alwayes as is the companie, that is, godly emongst the Godlie: A Protestant emongest Protestantes, wicked amongest the wicked, a Papist emongest Papistes, a worldling emongest worldlinges, and a Swearer

emongest

emongeſt Swearers, a Weather-cocke that turneth with euerie winde. The penitent man I ſay, is not of this ſtampe, but he is conſtant and zealous in all good thinges. He is zealous bothe againſt the pleaſures and profites of ſinne, though hee might winne a whole worlde, or pleaſure himſelfe neuer ſo much, by committing a ſinne againſt God, yet will hee refuſe it, for he hath learned from Chriſtes mouth, that it ſhall not profite a man to winne all the whole worlde, and to looſe his owne ſoule.

The laſt thing is Reuenge, that is, the penitent perſon is ſo offended, with the ſinne he hath committed, that he will bee reuenged of himſelfe for it. As for example, if he haue offended in gluttony, he will Reuenge himſelfe by faſting two or three dates after: If he haue offended in whoredome, he will be reuenged of his luſtes, be halting and withdrawing them euer after: If he haue offended in couetous catching and polling of other mens goodes, hee will be reuenged of himſelfe by reſtitution, as was godlie and penitent Zacheus, and this indeede is a ſpeciall fruite of Re-

pentaunce,

penitaunce, to reformc our selues in those thinges, wherein wee haue most offended. Now then you sée (my deare Brethren) what lieth in the bellie of repentance, and which be her inwardes, so that wee muste nedes now come to the unlasing, and unbowelling of Christes wordes. Except ye repent sayth he, ye shall all perish, that is, except yee haue this forenamed care, you shall all bee damned: Except ye haue this clearing of your selues, you shall bee damned: Except you haue this indignation, you shall all be damned: Except you haue this feare, you shalbe damned: Except you haue this desire, you shal al be damned: except you haue this zeale, you shall all bee damned: Except you haue this Reuenge, you shall all be damned.

For our Sauiour Christe dooth not speake of the bare name of Repentaunce: But of repentaunce with al his furniture and appurtenaunces: so that whosoeuer hath not Repentaunce with all his qualities and effectes, or at least some measure of them, hee hath no Repentaunce indéede, and therefore shall be damned. For except yee repent ye shall all perish. But

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me thinketh I here some man say. Here is nothing but damnation, damnation.

You preach nothing but the law: Let vs heare of the Gospell. My brethren I protest vnto you, that I speake of loue, whatsoeuer I speake, I desire the saluation of you all, if I could win but two in all this congregation, I would count my selfe happy, & thinke that God had greatly blessed my labours.

And vndoubtedly, if I knewe any nearer way to bring you vnto GOD, then by preaching the Law, to make you know your selues, surely, surely, I would vse it. Or if I could be perswaded, that the preaching of the Gospell, and mercy would doe you more good: you shoulde heare of nothing, but Gospel, Gospel, mercie, mercie: But alas, I see that euerie careleſſe, and euerie ignorant man presumeth vppon Gods mercy, I see that euery filthy liuer, and notorious blasphemer abuseth Gods mercy, in applieng it to himselfe without Repentaunce, so that they woulde make Gods mercie a cloake for their sinnes, I see that euerie man would faine be flattered in his sinne, & heare of it no more, but

haue the Gospell preached, which in deede belongeth not vnto them, continuing in their stubbornes: but only to the penitent sinner, which forsaketh himselfe, and groneth, and panteth vnder the burthen of his sinne. Therefore, when I see you humbled with the conscience of your sinnes, and grone and pant vnder the burden of them, when I see your faces blubbered with weping, and your hearts mollified, and sorrowing with care, then will I comfort you, and cease to preach the lawe. But I praye you, will you steale, murther, and commit adultery, and yet heare of mercie? Will ye Mocke, Sweare, Blaspheme, and Raile, and yet heare of mercie? Will you serue sinne, hate vertue, and followe your owne lusts, and yet heare of mercie? Would you haue Plaisters before you haue wounds? Would you haue Phisicke, before you bee sicke? Would you bee let bloud, before you haue neede? Woulde you not account him a foolish Phisitian that will minister Phisicke to a whole man? Woulde you not thinke him an vnskilfull Surgeon, that will applie a gentle salue to an olde festered soare, and not rather Corsie it? Then

know

knowe my brethren, that because you are full of grosse humors, you must haue strong purgations: Because ye are full of olde festered woundes, you must haue Corasiue salues, for that is the belle for you, and the spedieſt way to recouer your healthe, and for as muche as you bee rough Horses, you must haue a rough Rider: And harde knobbie timber, must haue harde wedges, and hard strokes with a beetle. We preach the Lawe to driue you to Christ: We preache Iudgementes, to make you seeke Mercie: We preach Damnation, to bringe you to Saluation. But to preache Mercie and forgiuenesse, before men see their sinnes, or know their miseries by the preaching of the Lawe, is to preach the Gospell vnprofitably. For he that is ignorant of the Lawe, knoweth not what misery is in himselfe, nor what mercie is in God.

What father is there, who, if his childe should play the stubborne boy, and disobey him in euery thing he commanded, would stroke his heade, and say hee weere a good boie, and not rather seuerely correcte him, and whippe him with a rodde? What maſter will commende his seruant for doing

what hee list, and not what hee commaundeth him: Euen so wee may not disobeye and doe euill, and loke to bee flattered to, and not rather chidden. Let vs know then that although God vse searing, launcing, eazing, and searching of the bones, and other violent remedies, yet in the meane while hee procureth our health by them. And let vs further vnderstande, that forasmuche as there is none other meanes to drawe vs vnto saluation, but by cleansing of al our vices, and the same cleansing can not be done but by violence, when wee bee warned by the doctrine of the Lawe, so as our owne consciences accuse vs.

Although we like well to be nowe and then flattered, and soothed, yet let vs seeke to bee spoken vnto earnestlie, and to haue our faultes tolde vs, and to be made ashamed of them, and to haue our vnhonestie discouered, & not desire to bee pleased. For it were the next waie, to make vs rotte in our owne filthines, if we should holde it so in secret: and it would cost vs deere the setting on, if wee shoulde bee so flattered by men, and in the meane season the heauenly Iudge shall thunder downe vppon vs,

Therefore,

Therefore, when anie man commeth to a Sermon, let him first and formost make his reckoning to bee rebuked, as méete is, and let him vnderstande, that it is for his profit that he is not soothed. And if he haue itching eares, let him laye them alwaye from him, assuring himselfe that else he is forecloſed, so as he shall neuer receiue the doctrine to his profite and instruction. And let him be content to haue his soares rubbed and bewraied, that he may be brought to that, which is for his welfare. If a man please a ſicke bodie, what shall become of him, shall hee giue him drinke euerie mynute of an houre? Shall he giue him wine, whereas he should giue him water? Shall hee giue him Sallets? It were the nexte way to poyson him. To be shorte, it is certayne that a man doeth alwayes séeke his owne death, when hée would haue men to sooth him. But nowe whiche is better either that hée whiche hath the ordering of a ſicke man, shoulde yéelde to all his desires, or that he shoulde bridle him, notwithstanding that hee chafe and gnashe his teethe. because he may not haue his owne will in his desires? You sée therfore how daunge-

rous a thing it is to flatter, and raise vp men with the preaching of mercie: before they haue beene cast downe with the sense of Gods Iudgments. Cease therefore to open your mouthes to make hue and crie ouer the Countrey, saying: they preach nothing but the Law, the Lawe, damnation, damnation: vnlesse ye will take in Christ too, and make him one of the number, and accuse him of wante of wisedome, because he preacheth & cryeth out, that whosoeuer repenteth not, shalbe condemned. For my part I preach the Gospell, to whome the Gospell belongeth, and the Law to whom the Lawe belongeth. I preache Mercie to whom Mercie belongeth, and Iudgement to whome Iudgement appertaineth. And therefore holde your peace, and be content to be ruled by the wisedome of God. But nowe let vs proceede to the third generall point, which is the time when we shoulde repent.

The holie Ghoste in the Scriptures pointeth vs to the present time, and exhorteth vs to make that the time of our Repentance, as Ioell. 2. 12. Therefore also now the Lorde sayeth, turne you vnto me with

with al your heart, with fasting, with weeping and with mourning. Likewise in the 3. Chap. to the Hebrues, exhorte one another while it is called to daie, leaste anie of you bee hardned, through the deceiptfulnesse of sin. And in the same Chapiter. To day if you will heare his voice, harden not your harts as in the prouocation. So that now, euen now, euen now is ỳ time of our Repentaunce. Nowe whilest hee calleth, nowe whilest he speaketh, now whilest he knocketh, let vs now therefore heare: let vs now therefore obey: Let vs now therefore redeeme this day, this present Wednesday, which haue forestalled so manye daies, which haue so longe hardened our heartes, which haue let so many good thinges run out, and spill besides. Let vs take vp this daie, and make it the day of our repentaunce. Although wee could neuer bee moued with any Sermon hitherto, yet let vs now be moued once at last. Let vs now say, this shall bee my day of Repentaunce. I will deferre it no longer. But now will I tourne vnto my God, and forsake all my former wicked waies, and mine own imaginations, I will now chaunge the course

of my life, and beginne all newe againe. I will be acquainted with Gods worde, and take counsell there how to doe, and how to behaue my selfe in euery action. I will not onely reforme my selfe, but also my whole household, Wife, Children, and Seruauntes, according vnto the same. Thus my deare Brethren, I beseeche you purpose in your heartes without anye further delaye, and bee not lyke to Epycures, and slacke graces, whiche saye youth will be youthfull, and youth wil haue his course, & what should we make it so holy, when we are young: tushe, there néds but a sigh an houre before death, let vs be merrie now, we shall neuer bee younger, wée will Repente when wée are olde. As though poore soules, they had repentance in their sléeue, and at their commandement, and that thei could repent when they liste. No, no, these fellowes shall paye for their presumption. For God will giue them ouer to hardenes of hearte, and impenitencie, because they toke so muche vppon them, and made so long delaies, that in the meane season they might enioye the profites and pleasures of sinne. Therefore good brethren, let vs not

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put it off from day to day, but let vs nowe seeke the Lord whilest he maie bee founde, and call vppon him whilest he is neere: let vs take time while time is: for time and tyde tarrieth for no man. Let vs knowe this to bee the time of our visitation. Our Sauiour Christ wepte ouer Hierusalem, because they knewe not ẏ time of their visitation. He reproueth the Iewes, because they coulde discerne the face of the Skye, but could not discerne the signes of the tymes. And surelie in the ende it will turne to our Destruction, if wee will not knowe this to be the daie of mercie, the time of Grace, wherein God stretcheth forth his hande vnto vs, and wisedome crieth out in the stretes.

Therefore, nowe whilest wee haue the light, let vs walke as children of the light: the nighte commeth, when no man cannt woorke. It shall bee to late to call for mercie after this life, when the gates of mercy are shut vp, and Repentaunce will bee to late. My deare christians, let vs remember the fiue foolishe Virgins, whiche because they forslowed the time, had heauen gates barred vp against them. Let vs also remē-

ber the fearefull & dolefull example of the riche Glutton, which being in Hell torments yelled, and yelped for the leaſt eaſe and help that might be, and could not haue it. An hundred thouſande times therefore, better it is for vs to leaue our ſinnes now: to mourne for them now, and now to Repente, than hereafter alas when it ſhall be to late. Better nowe a great deale to take ſome paines, to ſtraine our ſelues to leaue our ſinnes, and to make our heart ſmarte for them, than to bee condemned for euer, and to cry in the bottome of Hell, we haue wearied our ſelues in the way of wickedneſſe and Deſtruction, and we haue gone through daungerous waies: But we haue not knowen the way of the Lorde. What hath Pride profited vs? Or what profite hath the pompe of Riches brought vs? All theſe thinges are paſſed awaie like a ſhadowe, and as a Poſte that paſſeth by. Wee haue ſet our ſelues againſt the children of God, we had them in deriſion, and in a parable of reproche: We fooles thought their life madneſſe, and their ende without honour: but loe they are counted emongſt the children of God, and their portion is

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emonge the Saintes. Therefore let vs knowe the time of our calling, and let vs not be worse thē the foules of the aire: the Stork knoweth hir appointed time: the Turtle, the Crane, and the Swalowe, obserue the time of their comming. The Husbandman taketh his times. The mariner watcheth his tides. Therefore let vs also take the time, & turne vnto the Lorde whilest it is saide to day, which grace God graunt vs.

Nowe let vs returne vnto the fourth pointe, concerning the causes which maie moue vs vnto Repentance Herein I haue obserued nine especiall thinges. First, the great mercie of God leadeth vs vnto Repentaunce. As Rom. 2. The bountifulnesse of God leadeth vs vnto Repentance, sayth the Apostle. God doth continually followe vs with his mercies and benefites, bothe concerning our soules & bodies, wee haue no good thinge that wee haue not receyued at his hands, we hold all that we haue of him, and to him wee are beholding for all. Great is his mercie towardes our bodies, but much greater towardes our soules, and euerie Mercie and benefit, either to-

toward soule or body, calleth vs to repentaunce. He giueth vs meate, drinke, and clothing, these call vs to repentaunce: He keepeth vs at his owne costes and charges here below, this calleth vs to repentance: the Sunne, the Mone, and the Starres, calleth vs to repentaunce. The byrdes of the ayre, the fishes of the Sea, & the fruites of the earth crie out vppon vs, both loude, and shrill: Repent, repent. All creatures moone vs to Repentaunce. Our creation calleth, our redemption crieth, our sanctification knocketh, and our Election mooueth to Repentance. What could God do more for his vineyard, ỳ he hath not done? Therefore let vs repent.

Secondly, the iudgements of God moue vs vnto repentance: for al ỳ thunderbolts, plagues, & punishmentes, which God hath throwen downe vppon obstinate sinners, from the beginning of the worlde, are so manie warning peeces vnto vs, to awake vs out of the deade sleepe of sinne, and to pricke vs to Repentaunce. As in the 1. of Corinthians. 10. When the Apostle hath cited diuers great Iudgements of God against the old Israelites for diuers sinnes,

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he concludeth: now all these things came vnto them for examples, and were writte to admonishe vs, vppon whome the endes of the worlde are come. So that all the Iudgementes wee reade of in the Scriptures, are so manie admonitions, and as it were Carte Ropes to drawe vs to Repentaunce. All the iudgementes we haue read of, heard of, doe see and heare of euerie day, knocke & with maine strokes beate downe right vpon our consciences to repentance. The vglie Monsters, straunge Birthes, fierie Constellations, vnknowen Comets, sodaine deathes, maruellous droughtes, vnwonted snowes, horrible inundations, forraine wonders, straunge apparitions, threatening of heauen aboue, & streaming and shoting fire, trembling of the earth vnder our feete, and our houses ouer our heades, as of late daies. What are al these but as it were great Cranes with beams, and Cable Ropes, to drawe vs vp to the Lord by Repentance?

Thirdlie, the word of God haleth vs to repentance. For as God in olde time sent his Prophetes both earlie and late, to call the rebellious Iewes to Repentaunce: so

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he sendeth abroad his preachers, and messengers in those dayes, to sounde vp the trumpe of his woꝛd, & to ring the swéet bel of Aaron emongst thē, to awake thē to repentance: but alas how lightly are they regarded? Who heareth their voice? But surely this is ꝑ last remedie that God hath apointed, & if this wil not moue vs to Repentance, if this will not cure vs, then are we altogither vncurable.

Fourthly, the infinite number of sinnes we haue committed, ought to be so manie spurres in our sides to pricke vs to repentaunce. It is sufficient saith Saint Peter, that we haue spent the time past of our life after the lustes of the Gentiles, walking in wantonnesse, lustes, dꝛunkennes, gluttonie, dꝛinkings, and abhominable Idolatries. Therefoꝛe it is time now to repent. Oh that men woulde loke backe to themselues, and consider of themselues, as they were foꝛtie, thirtie, twentie, oꝛ ten yeares ago. Oh that they would call to mind their open & secret sins, & mée thinketh it should make their heart bleed within their bellie to thinke vpon them. Oh ꝑ they would cōsider how much time they haue mispent, &

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how manie good thinges they haue neglected, and altogither omitted.

Fifthly, the shortnesse of our life calleth earnestly vpon vs to repent. The time of our life is sixtie yeares & ten, & if they bee of strength, eightie yeares, yet the strength is but labour and sorrowe, so it is cut off quicklie, and we flie away saith the Prophet Dauid, we haue spent our yeres as a thought: Therefore he addeth. Teach vs to number our daies, that wee maie apply our heartes vnto wisedome. Our life for the shortnesse and inconstancie of it, in the Scripture is compared to grasse, to a vapour, to smoke, and to a Weauers shuttle, which glideth away swiftlie. Euen so the days of man passe away no man knoweth howe. Man is of short continuance saith Job, & full of trouble. Experience teacheth, that to day a man to morrow none. Hence away we must al, here is no abiding place for vs, how sone we know not. Therefore let vs repent.

Sixtly, the small number of those which shalbe saued, ought to thrust vs forward to repentance. Striue to enter in at the narrowe gate, for manie I say vnto you, will seke

seeke to enter in, and shal not be able saith Christ, Luke. 13. 24. And in an other place he saith, the gate is straight, and the waie narrowe that leadeth vnto life, and fewe there be that finde it. If men woulde consider of this, it would make them take better about them, and trie with themselues, whether they be of that small number or no.

Seuenthly, Death threateneth vs, who is very terrible to the flesh, and the remembraunce of it verie bitter to a man that is soused, and soaked in the pleasures of this worlde. It flattereth no man, it regardeth not persons, it weigheth not frendship, it careth not for rewardes, it is verie grym, vglie, and cruell, and killeth downe righte where it hitteth. Therefore let vs repent.

Eightlie, the daie of Iudgement, and seconde appearing of the Sonne of man, ought to quicken vs. The day of the Lord will come as a Theefe in the night, in the which the heauens shall passe away with a noyse, and the Elements shall melt with heate, and the earth with the workes that are therein shall be burnt vp, seeing therefore that all these things must be dissolued

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what manner of persons ought ye to be in holy conuersation and godlinesse saieth S. Peter. 2.3. The Lorde Jesus shall shewe himself from heauen, with his mighty angelles in flaming fire, rendering vengeaunce vnto them that knowe not God, and obeye not vnto the Gospell of our Lorde Jesus Christe, saith the Apostle 2. Thes. 1. I sawe saieth Saint John. Apoc. 20. A great white Throne, and one that sate on it, from whose face fledde away bothe the earth and the heauen, and their place was no more founde. And I sawe the deade bothe great and small stande before God: and the Bookes were opened, and an other Booke was opened, whych is the Booke of lyfe, and the deade were iudged of those thynges, which were written in the Bookes according to their woorkes. And the Sea gaue vp hir dead which were in her, and death and hell deliuered vp the deade which were in them, and they were iudged euerie man accordyng to his woorkes. In these places wee see bothe the sode inneſſe, the fearefulneſſe, and the glorie of Christes comming. For hee shall not come poorelie, and contemptuously as

in his first visitation, but he shall come verie princelie, royally, and triumphantly, to the great terrour of all his enemies, when a consuming fire shall goe before him, and ten thousand thousandes of Angels wayte vppon him: at what time the Kings of the earth, & the great men, and the riche men, and the chiefe Captaines, and the mightie men, and euerie bondman, and euerie freeman shall hide themselues in dennes, and amongest the rockes of the Mountaines, and say to the rockes and mountaines fall on vs, & hyde vs from the presence of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lambe, for the greate daie of his wrath is come, and who can stand? Apoc 6. Therefore let vs repent.

The last thinge is Hell forementes, then the which no thinge is more vntollerable. Therefore saith Christ, Marke, 9. If thyne hande cause thee to offende, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into lyfe maymed, then hauing twoo handes to goe into Hell. into the fire that neuer shall bee quenched, where the worme dieth not, and the fyre neuer goeth out. The Scripture speaketh verye terribly to our senses, concerning

cerning the estate of the damned persons, calling it hel fire, damnation, the lake that burneth with fire & brimstone for euer. In 30. cha. of the prophesie of Esay, it is called Tropheth, & it is euen prepared of olde, it is euen prepared for ỳ king: he hath made it deep and large, ỳ burning therof is fire & much wode: the breath of the Lorde like a Riuer of Brimstone doeth kindle it: these speaches are terrible to our senses, & maye marueylouslie amaze vs. But if I had the tongue of an hundred men, nay of an hundred Angels, yet were I not able to vtter them, as some shall one daye fele them, much lesse were you able to cõceiue them. If all the tortures & cruell torments that can bee deuised by the wit of man, were executed vppon some one, yet were it nothing to this. Wee poore wretches thinke there is no paine to a Collicke, or a cruell Ague. But if all Collickes, Agues, and all other strange diseases could possiblie light vpon one man, yet were it but a fleabiting to that which is to come. The pain is endlesse, easelesse, and remedilesse. The daies of their hellish torments shal neuer weare out, nor their yeares come to an ende, the

longer they continue, the lesse hope haue they. When as many yeres are expired, as there be men in the world, & starres in the heauens, when as many thousande yeares are ended, as there be stones, and sands by the Sea shore, yet stil there be ten hundred thousande tymes so manie more to come. Those that wil not now be moued in hearing, shall then be crushed to péces in feeling. All dronkards, swearers, whoremongers, vsurers, extortioners, liers, mockers, contemners, secure persons, iolly felowes, roisting ruffians, lustie bloudes, the braue laddes of this world, and all other vnbeleeuers, shal one day be apprehended, and arraigned before the barre of Gods tribunal seate, where the Maiestie of GOD shall stand aboue them with a naked sworde of vengeaunce, and a scepter of iustice. The Diuell that old Satanas shall stand on the one side to accuse them, and their own conscience on the other side to condemne them and the gaping gulfe of Hell vnderneath them, ready to swallow them vp for euermore. Then shall the dreadfull sentence of eternall woe, and damnation proceede against them. Go ye cursed into hel fire. &c.

There

There they shall drinke as a iust recompence for their iniquitie, the bitter cup of Gods eternall wrath and indignation, in the kingdome of darknes, and in the fearefull presence of Satan, & all the cursed Enemies of Gods grace, where the dolefull droome of Gods anger shall euer sounde through their eares, where shalbe wæping & gnashing of teeth, where shall be confusion, woe, and endles lamentation. Their gripes shall bee so great, their grones so dæpe, and their garboiles so vntollerable, that they shall grinne like a dog in their infernall conuulsions, and with howling, and yelling cry out: woe, & alas that euer I was borne: Oh that I had neuer beene borne, or that my mother had borne mee a Tode. For then should my condition haue byn better then it is. Cursed was the time I was begot in, the houre I was conceiued in, and the day that I sucked my Mothers paps. Cursed I was alwayes, cursed I am, & cursed I shall be for euermore. Woe, woe, how greate is my torment, whose heart doeth not melt, whose eares doe not glowe, whose haires doe not stand vppon his heade, to heare these thinges.

Therefore dere brethren let vs repent. If the mercie of God cannot allure vs, let his Iudgements scarre vs. If his Iudgementes cannot scarre vs, let his woorde moue vs, if his woorde cannot moue vs, let our sinnes amaze vs: If our sinnes cannot amaze vs, let the shortnes of our life dampe vs, if the shortnes of our life cannot dampe vs, let the smal number of those that shalbe saued affray vs, if that cannot affray vs, let death terrifie vs, if death cãnot terrifie vs, let the day of Iudgement shake vs, if that cannot shake vs, yet let Hell tormentes shudder vs, & rent vs in peeces. For verily verily my brethren, if none of al these cã preuayle, if we will not for al this repent, but be obstinate, then wee shall all perishe and bee damned, according to Christs woordes. Now let vs proceed to speake of those things, which let and hinder vs from Repentaunce, which indeede although they be in number infinite, yet at this time I will laye foorth seuen especiall lettes, and hinderances vnto Repentaunce.

The first is vnbeleefe, that is when men will not beleeue those things that are spoken and proued vnto them, out of the woord

of

of God. This is it that vomiteth vp al good thinges, and poiſoneth the verie intrals of a man, & kæpeth all good graces from vs. As appeareth, Math. 13. 58. He did not manye greate woorkes there for theyr vnbeleefes ſake. And the 4. to the Hebrewes it is ſaide. Vnto vs was the Goſpell preached, as alſo vnto them, but the word that they hearde profited not them, bicauſe it was not mixed with fayth in thoſe that heard it. So that here we may ſæ, although wee heare neuer ſo much, yet if we bringe not fayth with vs, wee ſhall neuer profite vnto Repentaunce. For vnbeléeſe taketh vp our hearts for Sathan, and refuſeth all the wholeſome doctrine of Saluation, and doth ſo harden them in the waies of ſinne, that in the ende they become paſt fæling, and cãnot be tuched one whit, either with the Iudgementes or mercies of God: But count the one as blaſts of wind: and make the other a couert for their filthineſſe. Yea ſhall note ſome men, who when they haue heard their ſinnes ſtraightlie ripped vp by the word of God, and their iuſt damnation prowed by the ſame, without ſpædie & earneſt repentance, wil breake out into theſe

words of vnbeléef. If it be as he saith, God helpe vs, I hope it is not so, I trust I shall doe well enough for all this, as long as I haue a good faith in God, and doe no body no harme: Shall I leaue my pleasures, & my profites for their sayinges? What, do they thinke none shalbe saued, but such, as read the Scriptures, and heare Sermons? God forbid but those which doe not go to heare sermons should be saued as well as they. Why may not one serue God as well at home in his house, hauing good Bookes and good Prayers, as by comming to the Church to heare sermons, and seruice? Alas these men stand too much in their owne light, and betray what folly and ignorance is in thē. For do they thinke to be saued by any other means thē God hath appointed? Or when God hath auouched any thinge in his word, wil they accept against it, and so make God a lyar? When God hath once set down a thing, and proued it to their faces, will they yet reply? When God hath tould vs that the preaching of the word, is the ordinary meanes of our saluation, shal we hope to be saued although we contemn it, and neuer or very seldome heare it? Is

not

not this plaine infidelity & vnbeliefe, that when God saith one thing, we will say an other: when God saith yea, we will say no I hope not so. Yes surelie, that is it, that stoppeth the waye vnto Gods graces, and barreth vs out from repentance.

The seconde let, is the presumption of Gods mercy, for if men be sharply reproued for their sinnes and exhorted vnto Repentance, by & by they take couert, saying. God is mercifull, G O D is mercifull, as though God were made all of mercie, and that there were no iustice in him at al: and thus the wicked make Gods mercy an occasion to sinne, which thing the Prophete Nahum in the first of his Prophesie doeth sharply reprooue. The Lord saith he, is slow to anger, but he is great in power, and will not surely cleare the wicked. But because I haue spoken afore of this presuming & misapplying of Gods mercie, I will here passe it ouer, willing you to note it as one speciall let vnto repentaunce.

The third hinderance is the example of the multitude, for that doeth harden & imbolden men vnto sinne. As when many birdes flicker and flock togither, they fall vp-

pon the net without any feare, but one or two alone wilbe afraid. Euen so the example of manie, and many fune companions do imbolden men to run through ỹ snares of Sathã without any mistrust. Therefore it is said in Exod. 23. Thou shalt not followe a multitude to doe euyll. This is the thinge that hindreth a great number from God, for they neuer loke vp vnto God, or to his worde, but stare vpon the common doinges of most men, and examples of the world, thinking if they do as the most men doe, as their Forefathers haue done before them, they are cocksure and of an euen ground. And herupon ariseth their diuelish Prouerbe: Doe as the most men doe, and the fewest will speake of you, but thei haue forgotten S. Paules rule. Rom. 12. Fashion not your selues like vnto this world. These fellows that stand vpõ the multitude will reason thus: We se̅ none of ỹ great ones of the world, none of the noble, none of the rich, none of the wise and prudent, receiue this doctrine, but onely a fewe shackrags, and beggerly rascals, & therefore it is a token that it is nothing worth, and that it is doubtfull, and not for vs to medle withal.

Loe,

Loe, what thoughts may creep in our heades, and how slily Sathan maie trumpe in our way, and blindfold vs, & lead vs away in the darke, by doting vs with ẏ example of the multitude. Therfore let vs take hēd of those pitfalles, which Sathan layeth in our way, & not bee caried away with these thoughtes and reasons. The wicked beare themselues in hand, that they shal win the game, and that ẏ goale goeth on their side, and there is nothing but crowing long before it bee daye, and greate triumphing amongst them before any stroke be striken. & that because wee be but a handfull of people, and they a great multitude, and that in a maner the whole worlde agreeth w̄ them to practise our death. Thus the deuil doeth cast a mist before their eies, and closly lead them away from repentaunce. Therefore deer brethren, let vs stand fast in the word of the Lord, and not be caried away, or bowed quite down with this raging streame of the multitude: but let vs knowe it to be one special engine of Sathan, whereby he driueth vs from repentance.

The fourth let vnto repentance is long custome of sinne. For that taketh away all

sense

ſenſe & feeling of ſinne, and making it as it were another nature vnto vs: So that we may aſwel alter nature as ſhake it of, whē it is once thus foldred vnto vs through lōg cuſtome. Therefore, it is ſaid, Iere. 13.23. Can the blacke More chaunge his ſkin, or the Leopard his ſpots? thē may ye alſo do good that are accuſtomed to do euill. Here the Prophet affirmeth, that it is as hard to cure an old diſeaſe that is bred in the bone and to remedie a ſinne that hath bēne hatched, and brought vp with vs, as to waſhe a black More white, or to change the ſpots of a Leopard, which cannot be without deſtroying of nature. And ſurely trie it who will, he ſhall finde it as harde a matter to leaue an old cuſtō, whether it be of ſwearing, of gaming, of lying, of whoring, of euill company, or of any other ſinne, as to waſh an Aethiopian. Therfore it is written. Prouer. 27. Though thou ſhouldeſt bray a Foole in a morter, emong wheate brayed with a peſtell, yet ſhall not his fooliſhnes depart from him. So that as long as we are in cuſtome with ſinne, the dore of repentance is barred vp againſt vs.

The fifth hinderance is long eſcaping of

punishment, for the wicked therby are harkened in sinne, and driuen off from repentance, euen as a old theefe that hath stolen a long time, and escapeth bothe prison and gallowes, is animated more boldly to proceed in his wickednesse, thinking hee shall for all dayes escape. So manie filthie & lose liuers go forward in their abhominations without repentaunce, thinking that bicause God doth not incontinently punish them, and shew some manifest iudgments & signes of his wrath vpon them, therefore they shalbe acquited for altogither. Whereas contrariwise, if God should by and by strike the downe assone as they had sinned by thundering vpon one, and lightning vpon another, & raining fire, and brimstone vpon the third it would make them afraid. Herevpon it is saide in Pet. 2. 3. 4. This first vnderstand that there shal come in the last dayes mockers, which will walke after their lustes, and say, where is the promise of his comming? for since the fathers died all things continue alike from the beginning of the creation. But let these men well knowe, that when God hath delayed a long time, & prolonged the terme of the

wicked

wicked, at length he will shew, ỹ although hée waited for their repentance, yet he forgatte not their misdœdes, but registred them before him, and packed them vp vpõ a great heape, to increase the terrour of his wrath.

The first hinderance is the beholding of other mens endes. For when some men that haue liued a wicked and vngracious life, and haue been notorious sinners euen to the worldward, so that euery man could pointe at them: yet, if vpon their death bed they can say a fewe good wordes, and crye God mercy, and say their praiers, and forgiue all the world, and so die quietly: It is marueilous to heare howe the foolishe people of the world will exalt them, and iustifie them, saying: he made a very good ende, as any man could make, and died as quiet as a Lambe, & set all things in good order, before hee died. Herevpon an other wicked & monstrous verlet is encouraged to sinne. For thinketh he, such a man liued as lewdely as I, or any man else, and yet hee made a verie good ende, and why maie not I doe so too? But alas, these mens eies are bleared. For to die quietly is not to dy

godlie,

godly, to crye God mercie for fashion, is not to haue God mercifull, to saye a fewe prayers with teth outwarde, is not to die in the faith of Christ, for many may doe al this, and yet die miserably.

The last let is hope of long life, for while men fede, and beset themselues in this hope, they war dronken in sin, and deferre the day of Repentaunce. As the riche man in the Luke. 12. dreaming of his long lyfe, cast off all thought of God, and of the other lyfe, and of Christes comming, and of Repentaunce, and all good thinges, and sayde within himselfe: Soule, thou hast much goods laid vp for many yeres, liue at ease, eate, drinke, and take thy pastime. Thus the bleareyed men of this world, choke vp Repentance, & quite smother it, by doting themselues with hope of long life. Therefore my deare brethren, I beseeche you by the mercies of God in the bowels of Iesus Christ, that none of all these common lets, may stay you from spedie and vnfaigned Repentance. But that you may ouerstride them all, least vnhappily you being found without Repentance, and taken tardie in your sinnes, should all perish, and be dam-

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